

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Tuesday, September 18, 2018
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
James Morton, Vice-Chair, Boston
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Amanda Fernandez, Belmont
Maya Mathews, Student Advisory Council, Newton
Margaret McKenna, Boston
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Martin West, Newton

Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Chair Sagan convened the meeting at 8:35 a.m. and members introduced themselves. He welcomed Maya Mathews to her first meeting as a member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board). Chair Sagan said he has been speaking with the Chairs of the Board of Early Education & Care and Board of Higher Education about establishing a working group to review longitudinal data and outcomes across the education sectors. He said they will look to other states for possible models for this cross-sector work. He added that protecting data privacy and security would be important considerations.

Commissioner Riley welcomed Ms. Mathews to her first meeting with the Board. He provided a brief update on the gas explosions and fires that have affected communities in the Merrimack Valley. The Commissioner expressed his sympathy to the family of Leonel Rondon, the 18-year-old Phoenix Charter Academy and former Lawrence High School student who was tragically killed due to one of the explosions. Commissioner Riley thanked the first responders, Eversource for helping to get the schools open again, and all who have contributed to help the families in need.

Ms. Craven arrived at 8:42 a.m.

Commissioner Riley provided updates on progress in the PLESH litigation; the Department's work with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the Office of the Attorney General on a model Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Massachusetts school resource officers; and the expected public release of the MCAS and accountability results for schools and districts during the week of September 24, 2018.

Secretary Peyser updated the Board on the supplemental budget pending in the Legislature. He explained that the Governor asked for \$70 million for school safety initiatives, including \$20 million for infrastructure investments in schools to increase safety and security, and \$40 million to strengthen behavioral and mental health services for students. He added that another \$30 million is in the supplemental budget proposal for targeted assistance.

Secretary Peyser noted that he and the Governor, Lt. Governor, Commissioner, and Commissioner of Higher Education have been visiting schools around the Commonwealth to promote the early college initiative. He said they heard firsthand from students about the value of these programs, and the initiative is off to a great start. Secretary Peyser also spoke about the Innovation Pathways program (career-oriented courses of study for high school students based on partnerships with employers) and Connecting Activities, through which an increasing number of high school students are participating in paid internships with STEM companies.

In connection with the model MOU for school resource officers, Mr. Moriarty asked if the study by the Secret Service on school safety teams was a useful resource. Secretary Peyser said the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security has made use of that study and others.

Statements from the Public

1. **Emily Ruddock, Director of Policy and Government Affairs, MASSCreative and Arts for All Coalition**, addressed the Board on the Arts Curriculum Framework Review: Progress Report.

Secretary Peyser added to his update that October 22-26, 2018, is STEM Week in the Commonwealth's schools and encouraged people to get involved. Ms. McKenna followed up on the school safety discussion and said she has learned on Martha's Vineyard about the good that can result from police establishing a close relationship with community service agencies as well as schools. Mr. Morton added that the former and current police chiefs in Boston attribute the reduction of the crime rate to these kinds of partnerships. Mr. Moriarty noted the Working Cities Challenge in Chelsea and other communities as another example of these effective practices.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of June 26, 2018 Regular Meeting.

The vote was 10-0-1. Ms. Mathews abstained.

Election of Board Vice-Chair

Chair Sagan said Mr. Morton has served ably as Vice-Chair of the Board and would be willing to serve again. Chair Sagan asked if members had a nomination. Ms. Craven nominated Mr. Morton as Vice-Chair. She said all who know Mr. Morton are moved by his commitment to help

students across the Commonwealth. She added he is a great ambassador for the Board statewide. Mr. Moriarty seconded the nomination.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education elect James Morton to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board, in accordance with Article I of the By-Laws.

The vote was 10-0-1. Mr. Morton abstained. He thanked the Board.

Chair Sagan reappointed the Board Budget Committee as follows: Katherine Craven (Chair), Ed Doherty, Margaret McKenna, Michael Moriarty, and Mary Ann Stewart. All members agreed to serve. He appointed the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation Committee as follows: Vice-Chair Morton (Chair), Amanda Fernandez, and Chair Sagan. All members agreed to serve. Chair Sagan said he does not see a need to appoint a Charter School Committee this year; he would appoint members in the future if necessary. Ms. Stewart asked that the Board website be updated to reflect the changes.

Commissioner Riley's Goals for 2018-2019

Commissioner Riley presented his goals for 2018-2019, stating we have reached a unique inflection point after 25 years of education reform. He said the Department's day-to-day work continues, and one of his goals is to assess the Department as a whole. Commissioner Riley said he is launching a communication and outreach strategy to bring people together, celebrate teachers, focus on quality instruction, and chart the way forward, with a statewide conference planned for spring 2019. He reviewed other goals he has set, including working with the executive and legislative branches and stakeholders to make the foundation budget responsive to the needs of students, reviewing the new accountability system, and promoting equity and diversity in the educator workforce. He said 40 percent of Massachusetts students are students of color in contrast to only about 8 percent of our teaching force. Commissioner Riley said we have to do a better job of attracting and retaining excellent teachers, especially teachers of color.

Ms. Stewart said she supports the equity/diversity work and asked how it would proceed. Commissioner Riley said the Department has done some inward-facing work with Courageous Conversations and now would focus on more outward-facing work including a multi-prong strategy for recruiting students of color into the field and providing incentives.

Ms. Fernandez recommended a multicultural perspective to ensure that outreach for the teacher pipeline includes communication in languages other than English. She also suggested the Commissioner be more explicit in his goals about closing achievement gaps. Commissioner Riley agreed and said he would broaden that to say achievement and opportunity gaps. Ms. Craven concurred and asked about how to encourage use of best practices in schools and districts. Commissioner Riley said he is hoping to have more funding available for targeted assistance if the supplemental budget passes. Mr. West suggested adding more explicit problem statements to the document. He asked if the Commissioner could be more concrete on the

history/social science goals relating to the new standards and development of assessments. Chair Sagan said while a statement of goals cannot spell out everything, it would be helpful to have some more detail.

Mr. Moriarty asked that the Commissioner be more explicit about early literacy. Vice-Chair Morton encouraged the Commissioner to reach out to Board members on how they could actively support the Commissioner and the Department. Ms. McKenna echoed the comments on the achievement gap and asked about the timeline for a working committee to develop a plan to diversify the teaching force. Commissioner Riley said his goal is to have a plan by the winter.

Ms. Mathews said she hopes students will be involved wherever possible, and she is pleased that students will be involved in the spring conference. Ms. Mathews asked about plans to revise the Foreign Language curriculum framework. Senior Associate Commissioner Heather Peske responded that the Department is reviewing the standards and beginning to do outreach to stakeholders. She said the process takes 18-24 months and she anticipates the Board will see proposed new Foreign Language standards in the 2019-2020 school year.

Chair Sagan asked the Commissioner to tweak the memo based on the discussion and send it back to the Board.

Jamil Siddiqui, East Bridgewater Junior/Senior High School: Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, 2019

Commissioner Riley introduced Jamil Siddiqui, the 2019 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. The Commissioner said when he presented the award to Mr. Siddiqui at his high school, the students were near tears because they just love this man. Commissioner Riley showed the brief video celebrating teachers, which has been on television, radio, and social media; it features Mr. Siddiqui.

Mr. Siddiqui said it is an honor to be chosen for this award. He thanked the Commissioner and the Department for recognizing teachers and great teaching. He gave a brief overview of his educational background and career, starting with his becoming a math tutor while majoring in mathematics at Boston University and realizing how much he enjoyed sharing mathematics with other people. Mr. Siddiqui said what has kept him in teaching is the relationships he builds with his students. He explained that many of his students from East Bridgewater have gone on to teaching careers, 15 have become math teachers, and 12 of them teach in Massachusetts.

Mr. Siddiqui said passion for the subject and for students is what inspires teachers, and we need to find ways for teachers to stay dedicated to their subject and students and the profession. He said his platform as Teacher of the Year is that we need to support teachers and keep their passion strong through recognition, respect, and honoring the work. Mr. Siddiqui said teachers benefit greatly from high-quality professional development and opportunities to work with colleagues. Mr. Siddiqui advocated building networks of support for teachers and identifying places they can get assistance and discuss their ideas with teachers who are teaching the same topics, both within and outside of their own districts.

Ms. Craven congratulated Mr. Siddiqui and asked what the Board could do to make professional development more effective. He said the best professional development is directly responsive to teachers' needs in their classrooms. Ms. McKenna asked how the Board could help support teachers. Mr. Siddiqui said teachers want to feel respected and anyone who feels respected is apt to put in more effort. Mr. Moriarty asked about professional development in districts that use teacher coaching and teamwork. Mr. Siddiqui said the common planning time model can bring people together productively to share ideas about instructional practices, but occasionally the time is consumed dealing with nuts-and-bolts issues.

Chair Sagan thanked Mr. Siddiqui for his work and his inspiring presentation.

At 9:55 a.m., Chair Sagan announced the Board would take a short break. Chair Sagan reconvened the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Arts Curriculum Framework Review: Progress Report

Commissioner Riley said the Department is currently revising the 1999 Arts framework. He added that the proposed staffing plan that he submitted to the Executive Office includes a 1.0 FTE position for a full-time arts education coordinator. Commissioner Riley introduced Ron Noble, Associate Commissioner, and Craig Waterman, Assistant Director of Instructional Policy, who presented to the Board on the Arts Curriculum Framework review.

Mr. Noble outlined the four goals for the revision and explained the process and timeline. Mr. Waterman reviewed the outreach to stakeholders and the goals that emerged from those discussions: the standards should be specific and measurable, they should not merge disciplines including Media Arts, they should identify common practices across disciplines, and the standards should be in grade pairs. Mr. Waterman said the process included recruiting 11 facilitators, with two in most disciplines, to provide coherence across disciplines and lead review panels with 45 reviewers. Mr. Waterman noted that the writing phase began in the summer of 2018; the reviewers identified key learnings, which standards to move, add, revise, delete, or retain, and revised individual standards using cross-discipline peer reviews to ensure alignment. Mr. Waterman said during the fall and early winter, he anticipates a final review meeting, feedback from the Arts Advisory Council, content advisor input, the drafting of principles and resources for the frameworks, and final editing.

Mr. Waterman said the plan is to come back to the Board in December or January for a detailed discussion, with a vote in February to release the draft revised framework for public comment and then bring back the final document for a vote in May. Mr. Doherty asked what subjects are included in Media Arts. Mr. Waterman said Media Arts is an emerging discipline and key components include using collections of images and sounds with interactivity, as in developing webpages or a video game. Ms. Mathews asked if Media Arts could be found in vocational studies. Mr. Waterman said several of the disciplines do have parallels in the vocational/technical standards and the team will make sure they are well aligned.

Chair Sagan asked about other issues the Board should consider. Mr. Noble said one issue is instructional time in relation to the standards, adding that the team is trying to strike a balance

and provide options for districts. Mr. Noble said that has been a major topic of discussion. Ms. Stewart and Mr. Moriarty both voiced their support for a full-time Arts Coordinator position. Chair Sagan said the Board looks forward to further discussion of the Arts curriculum standards.

Update on Next-Generation MCAS and Planning for the High School Competency Determination (CD) Standard

Commissioner Riley introduced Jeff Wulfson, Deputy Commissioner; Michol Stapel, Associate Commissioner; Katie Bowler, Director of MCAS Test Development; and Lucy Wall, Legal Counsel. Mr. Wulfson expressed his thanks to Ms. Stapel and the Department's student assessment team for their work on the next-generation MCAS development for the past three years. He noted that during that time they were also administering the legacy tests, administering the last year of PARCC experiment, and making the conversion to computer-based testing in accordance with the Board's directive. Mr. Wulfson said he wanted to acknowledge it has been a big lift and they did it with flying colors. Chair Sagan concurred on behalf of the Board.

Ms. Stapel provided an overview of the timeline since November 2015 when the Board voted to develop a next-generation MCAS program and looking ahead to spring 2019 and 2020. She reviewed the spring 2018 MCAS participation rates, which were high, and said the phasing in of computer-based testing went very well: nearly 90 percent of students in grades 3-8 were able to test successfully on a computer and the initiative is continuing. Ms. Stapel provided a tentative timeline for release of the 2018 test results.

Ms. Stapel gave an overview of the proposed transition plan to new grade 10 ELA and Math tests and planning for the competency determination standard for students in the class of 2023. She noted this is a major decision point for the Board because the standards have not changed significantly in about 20 years. Ms. Stapel discussed the transition period that the Board established so that students would have fair notice of any new standard for graduation. She outlined the Department's activities this year including communication and outreach to stakeholders, the release of practice tests to the field, development of a research plan, and ongoing discussions with technical experts. Mr. West said the working group on data that Chair Sagan mentioned earlier could help with thinking about a new standard.

Ms. Stapel discussed considerations for transition to the next-generation high school Science tests and reviewed the participation rates in the 2018 high school Science and Technology/Engineering tests. Secretary Peyser asked about options for students if the Chemistry test is phased out. Ms. Bowler said they could take the Biology or Introductory Physics test or perhaps file for a portfolio review in Chemistry. Mr. Wulfson noted that the portfolio review is a successful route for most students. Vice-Chair Morton asked if this might increase the achievement gap. He said it would be important to have alternative strategies. The Vice-Chair added that some of the data around Technology/Engineering may be a signal that we need to introduce STEM earlier. Chair Sagan asked for more information on what is included in the category of Technology and Engineering. Ms. Mathews asked whether students would have to pay if Chemistry and Tech/Engineering tests are outsourced. Chair Sagan said if we go that route, the state would pay.

Ms. McKenna asked Commissioner Riley how difficult is it to recruit highly qualified Biology and Physics teachers in high poverty schools. Commissioner Riley said it has always been a struggle and with the economy today, those who graduate with a Biology or Physics degree could make double or triple what a teacher makes because these fields are in demand.

Ms. Stapel reviewed the proposed timeline for high school Science tests and the goals for student assessment in the Commonwealth. Chair Sagan thanked the panel for the update.

Foundation Budget Overview; Process and Timelines

Commissioner Riley introduced Jeff Wulfson, Deputy Commissioner; Bill Bell, Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO; and Rob O'Donnell, Director of School Finance, to present an overview of the foundation budget. Commissioner Riley also confirmed that the school report card public comment period closes on Friday.

Mr. Wulfson noted provided an overview of the history of the foundation budget, which is a statutory formula that reflects what the state believes each school district must have to provide an adequate education. He added that the formula has a number of inputs, including enrollment, student demographics, grade levels, and type of enrollment. Mr. Wulfson noted that the foundation budget is a key measure of whether the state is meeting its obligation under the Massachusetts Constitution to provide an adequate education to all public school students in the Commonwealth, as set forth by the Supreme Judicial Court in the 1993 *McDuffy* decision.

Mr. Wulfson explained for the current fiscal year, FY19, the total foundation budget statewide is a little under \$11 billion, and with about one million schoolchildren in Massachusetts, that is about \$11,000 per student. He added that the foundation budget is funded through a combination of state aid that we refer to as Chapter 70 and a required local contribution from cities and towns where students live, and that contribution is a formula based on the city's or town's wealth and fiscal capacity. He said about \$6 billion comes from local sources and about \$5 billion comes from Chapter 70 state aid. Mr. Wulfson said the foundation budget excludes a number of significant items: state funding for school transportation, school building construction, extraordinary special education costs, and teacher pensions. He said the state has separate funding streams for those items totaling about \$2 ½ billion, on top of the \$5 billion in Chapter 70 aid.

Mr. Wulfson explained that 2015, the Foundation Budget Review Commission was established to review the whether the foundation budget formula has kept pace with increasing costs and increasing demands on public schools. The Commission's report focused on four areas: health insurance for school employees and retirees, special education costs, additional costs for low-income students, and additional costs for English language learners. Mr. Wulfson noted that the Commission recommended increasing all those areas in the foundation budget to provide more resources to schools and districts. He said in recent years the state budget did adjust the foundation budget to partially implement the recommendations but consensus has emerged that we are overdue for a comprehensive update of the foundation budget formula based on the Commission's recommendations. Mr. Wulfson noted that in this past session, both the House and Senate passed bills to update the foundation budget, which led to the appointment of a

conference committee to resolve the differences in each version. He said that despite a lot of effort by staff in the Legislature, time ran out.

Mr. Wulfson said none of the discussions had to do with FY19 despite reports otherwise. He added there is still plenty of time and opportunity to address updates to the foundation budget and many people in the Executive and Legislative branches are hard at work. He explained that many districts are spending well above their foundation budget for a variety of reasons. He said an increase in the foundation budget does not always mean more state aid for a district. Mr. Wulfson added that the relationship between spending and student success is murky.

Ms. Craven said it is important to look at the four areas the Commission focused on and see how they are weighted, because the first three could apply to every district and only the fourth element would close achievement gaps. She added the Department's analysis could help the Legislature understand what those gap-closing levers are. Ms. Craven suggested that in relation to Commissioner Riley's goals, this would be a key lever. She noted that state funding is finite and the foundation budget was created to close the achievement gap, but less money is available for gap-closing if more goes into increases for every district.

Secretary Peyser said many districts do not benefit at all when the foundation budget is increased; those that do are at the threshold of greater need and less local capacity. Mr. Wulfson said there are two categories of districts in fiscal distress: the gateway cities where enrollment has been growing and that keeps them right at the foundation level, and the 100 tiny districts west of Worcester where declining enrollment means increases to the foundation will not help them. Ms. Craven said she would like to see something more targeted. Secretary Peyser said we need to consider both how to target funding to the places where it is needed the most, which concerns the achievement gap, and how to ensure additional funds will be used in a way that will improve student outcomes, which is a more complicated conversation. Ms. Craven noted that MCAS was part of the grand bargain that led to the foundation budget.

Chair Sagan asked if there is anything the Board could do differently on this issue. The Commissioner said districts do not necessarily benefit from increases in Chapter 70 if the additional state aid prompts the city or town to reduce its effort. He added that the idea of targeted resources makes sense to him. Mr. Wulfson said we would continue the discussions with the Secretary and the Legislature.

Mr. Moriarty asked if Medicaid reimbursements could go back to the district rather than the municipality. Mr. Wulfson said we encourage that arrangement because it is to everyone's benefit, but it is not a legal requirement.

FY2019 Budget Overview; Process and Timelines for FY2020 Budget

Bill Bell, Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO, with Julia Jou, Budget Director, reported on the current year budget and the process for developing the FY20 budget. Mr. Bell said the Department has filed its FY19 spending plan with the Executive Office of Administration and Finance (ANF), which sets the blueprint for this year's spending and the baseline for FY20. He said the FY19 state budget includes full funding for the student assessment program and

additional monies for implementing the new History and Social Science standards, adult education, and college/career readiness. Mr. Bell noted the Board's Budget Committee would meet this afternoon to begin discussing priorities for the FY20 budget request. He distributed the budget timeline and spreadsheet.

Mr. Bell said federal education funding is relatively stable this year. In response to a question from Ms. Fernandez about the line item for public school military obligation, Mr. Bell explained this account offsets particular districts' costs for students from military families housed on military bases. Mr. Wulfson said federal funds for this purpose have declined and the grant program helps mitigate the education costs.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board